

## NOTES

### A HOARD OF PALSTAVES FROM NYLAND, CHEDDAR

A hoard of two palstaves was found by Mr M. Smith of Banwell using a metal detector in 1987. The palstaves were discovered on the south side of a wooded east-west ridge lying to the east of Nyland Hill, NGR ST46535058. They lay at a depth of approximately 25cms about 4 metres below the top of the ridge. When the writer visited the site sometime after the discovery no archaeological features relating to the hoard and its concealment were identifiable. Mr Smith recorded that the palstaves lay together positioned at 180° relative to each other. The fact that they were in contact would strongly suggest that they had not moved down the slope far, if at all, since burial, an important point in view of the steepness of the slope and the loose nature of the top soil with its high content of large stones. A search using a metal detector in the vicinity of the find spot failed to produce further pieces of Bronze Age metal work.

Although a very small hoard, these two palstaves are of some interest. They are broad-bladed palstaves of unusually small size and with markedly raised central mid-ribs dating to the Taunton phase of the Middle Bronze Age. They are cast from the same pair of moulds and both were unfinished. Casting flashes remain down the sides of both palstaves, though in the case of A they are less pronounced and have been removed from much of the lower half. The blade of palstave B is

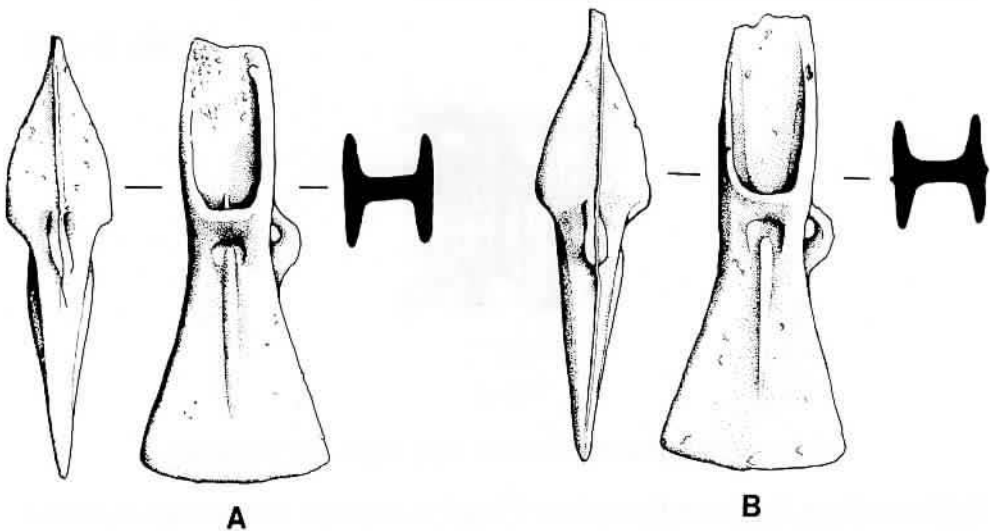


Fig. 1

unsharpened. On palstave A the process of sharpening the blade had begun. There is a slight shoulder on one face running parallel to the curve of the blade edge at 0.5cm from it. This feature was produced by hammering and had the effect of flattening and broadening the cutting edge, hence the difference in blade width between the two palstaves. The slight difference in length of the palstaves is due to damage sustained by A in antiquity. Both palstaves have holes and pits representing air bubbles formed during the casting process.

Dimensions:-

- palstave A length: 11.67 cm  
width of blade: 4.89cm  
width of butt: 1.90cm
- palstave B length: 11.95cm  
width of blade: 4.70cm  
width of butt: 1.80cm

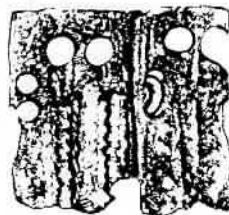
I am grateful to Victoria Pirie of Woodspring Museum, Weston-super-Mare, for putting me in touch with the finder, to Mike Smith for allowing the palstaves to be recorded, and to Lizzy Induni for the drawings.

STEPHEN C. MINNITT

#### LORICA SQUAMATA FOUND ON HAM HILL

Two damaged bronze scales were found lying on the surface of a grassy bank on Ham Hill (ST478169). The bank is the edge of an old spoil heap and it has been eroded as a result of people sliding down it. The larger piece is 16mm × 23mm and has two holes approximately 3mm in diameter at the top and two smaller holes approximately 2mm in diameter on each side about 1cm from the top. The two scales are joined by a small loop of bronze wire which passes through the side holes. The scales are similar in size to the scales which form part of a cuirass and which are held by the Somerset County Museum. They differ in that they are decorated, and for this reason Dr Graham Webster thinks that they may have belonged to an officer, probably a centurion or maybe a tribune.

ROBIN PEARCE



1 cm.

Fig. 2

#### WEDMORE PARSONAGE: THE OLD VICARAGE

In his article on 'Somerset Evangelical Clergy' in *Somerset Archaeology & Natural History* vol. 130, William Gibson states that when John Richards was appointed to the living of Wedmore in 1810, in addition to the curacy that he already held at St

Michael's Bath, he was unable to reside at Wedmore 'since there was no parsonage'.<sup>1</sup> This is incorrect. The 'parsonage' may have been in bad repair, since there was neither vicar nor curate in residence between 1803 and 1811,<sup>2</sup> but it certainly existed then as it still does now, in the form of the Old Vicarage, at the top of Church Street in Wedmore, opposite the west end of the churchyard. The core of the present building is early 17th century. Richard's own Memoir, which Mr Gibson cites as his source, records that 'On being instituted to the living in 1811, he [Richards] lost no time in completing, at a considerable expense, the repair of the vicarage-house, and appointing a resident Curate'.<sup>3</sup> According to Hervey, Richards added a drawing-room on the south front of the house.<sup>4</sup> W.B. Cattell was installed as resident curate on 6 November 1811.<sup>5</sup>

John Richards himself was, in fact, concerned about the conflicting demands of Wedmore and of his work among the poor in the slums of Bath. In 1818 he wrote 'did I not think that Providence had fixed my place here [in Bath], I believe I should seriously think of going to Wedmore'. Continuing doubts about his non-residence, indeed, led him to offer his resignation from Wedmore several times, only to have it refused.<sup>6</sup> The problem of non-resident clergy, in Wedmore as in other isolated parishes, was one which had considerable impact on the social fabric of the village; but in this case at least, it was not caused by the absence of somewhere to live.

HAZEL HUDSON

1 SANHS 130, p. 136.

2 Hervey, S.H.A. *Wedmore Chronicles vol. I: 1881-1887* (1887) p. 271.

3 *The Sermons and Letters of John Richards prefixed with a Memoir* (Anon.) (London 1834), p. 8.

4 Hervey, S.H.A. *op. cit.* p. 277.

5 *Ibid.* p. 271.

6 *The Sermons and Letters*, p. 374, 426-7.